

# **FINAL REPORT**

**COUNTY OF INYO**

**2001-2002 GRAND JURY**

*the 2001-2002 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report*

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The Honorable Patrick Canfield and The Honorable Dean Stout  
Judges of the Inyo County Superior Court  
Inyo County, State of California

Your Honors:

In compliance with the laws of the State of California and the charge given to us, the Inyo County Grand Jury, 2001-2002, is pleased to submit our Final Report to the Court, to officials of Inyo County government and to its citizens. Also Included in our report are responses to the recommendations by the 2000-2001 Grand Jury by the appropriate agencies. Where an agency did not respond, it is duly noted.

I know I speak for each active member of this Grand Jury when I express appreciation to the Court and to county officials for their support and cooperation in providing us with information, for taking their time to meet with us, and in aiding us in our investigations. It has been an interesting and educational experience for us as we have been able to place faces with government agencies and offices, to become familiar with the problems confronting those who are responsible for providing services to our general public, and to hear the concerns of individual citizens who have demonstrated their interest in our county by calling to our attention specific issues that they feel need to be examined. The investigations that we have undertaken have resulted, for the most part, in reinforcing our confidence in the governance of our county and the knowledge that the recommendations we make herein will be given careful consideration.

As foreperson, I especially want to express my gratitude to each member of the Grand Jury who has given of his or her time to accomplish the task that we have been commissioned to perform. It has taken many hours of meetings, both as a jury and with our various committees, to investigate, deliberate and prepare our Final Report. Truly, this has been a sacrificial service.

Finally, my appreciation is extended to those citizens who have placed their confidence in our grand jury system by submitting their ideas as to areas for the jury's work and/or meeting with our jury and its various committees. While the jury has not been able to follow up on all citizen complaints or found serious problems that demand corrective attention, such involvement is evidence that our citizenry expects their Grand Jury to be actively involved in its "watch dog" role and looks to this constitutionally-mandated process as an important protection against government misconduct. I trust that this Final Report will be carefully read and considered. Toward that end, the Grand Jury has opted to publish its findings by newspaper insert in order to achieve the best possible distribution to the citizens of Inyo county.

Sincerely,

Lorin H. Soderwall, Foreperson  
2001-2002 Inyo County Grand Jury

# **2001-2002 Grand Jury Final Report**

## **Agency and Officials Response Requirements**

Section 925 of the California Penal Code provides that grand juries shall investigate and report on the operations, departments, or functions of the county, and Section 925(a) provides that they may do the same on the operations, departments or functions of any city within the county.

Penal Code Sections 933 *et seq.*, requires public agencies and elective county officers affected by the findings and recommendations contained in the grand jury's Final Report to respond to such recommendations. The affected public agencies have ninety days, and elective public officers have sixty days in which to file their responses.

As to grand jury findings, Penal Code Section 933.05 requires responding parties to indicate whether they agree in whole or disagree in whole, or in part, with each grand jury finding.

As to grand jury recommendations, Penal Code Section 933.05 also requires responding parties to indicate whether each recommendation has been implemented or will be implemented and, if so, when. If a responding party will not implement a recommendation, the party must explain why it will not implement such recommendation. If a party believes that a recommendation requires further study, Penal Code Section 933.05 requires that it be stated when the results of the study will be publicly discussed.

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## **INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY, 2001-2002**

**Lorin H. Soderwall, Foreperson**  
**Donald M. Reese, Foreperson, pro tem**  
**Jack Pound, Treasurer**  
**Lisa Vitale, Recording Secretary**  
**Evie Blume, Corresponding Secretary**  
**Ardis Whitaker**  
**Lloyd Anderson**  
**Debbie Baetge**  
**Jim Nixon**  
**Richard Olson, Jr.**

## **Mission Statement**

The Inyo County Grand Jury is an arm of the Superior Court system and serves as an investigatory body.

### ***The Grand Jury:***

1. Will act as the public's 'watchdog' by investigating the affairs of government.
  2. Will judiciously investigate all allegations against and misconduct by public officials.
- Our purpose is to assure honest, efficient government that functions in the best interest of the citizens of Inyo County.

### ***Introduction:***

The Grand Jury is an instrument of the judicial system of our government and carries on the best traditions of English Common Law and democratic government. Our form of government has vested the ultimate power of decision in its citizens. The Grand Jury is a reflection of this intent, and has been in place for over 50 years.

The Inyo County Grand Jury is composed of eleven citizens nominated by judges, members of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors, and city council members. Citizens may volunteer by contacting one of the aforementioned offices. Members of the Grand Jury are selected in a random drawing conducted by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. The Grand Jury's term of office is for one year.

### ***What is the Grand Jury?***

The Grand Jury is an investigatory body and is part of the government. Both the Constitutions of the United States and the State of California call for grand juries. Unlike a trial jury, which exists only to try individual cases, the Inyo County Grand Jury is a permanent body with members serving one-year terms.

In the course of its investigations the Grand Jury may hire independent auditors and subpoena witnesses and documents. The Jury may ask advice of Legal Counsel on civil matters, confer with the Inyo County District Attorney on criminal matters, and discuss problems with the judges of the Superior Court.

The Grand Jury is charged by the Court to order audits and to conduct hearings, interviews and investigations. The charge provides definition and delineation, so that the effort of the Jury is focused on solutions. Committees within the Jury are established to better manage the responsibilities and utilize individual talents and abilities. There is latitude in selection of areas of investigation.

The Jury has oversight responsibility for all publicly funded local entities operating in Inyo County and acts in the role of ombudsman for any citizen complaining against any government entity or official within Inyo County. Local entities under the jurisdiction of the Grand Jury include the County of Inyo, the City of Bishop, joint powers agencies, public prisons and limited jurisdiction over special districts and school districts located in Inyo County. The Grand Jury does not have jurisdiction over State or Federal government operations including the court system.

The jury's Annual Report is submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Inyo County. The Grand Jury distributes its Annual Report to all affected agencies and to the citizens of the county.

The findings and recommendations in its Final Report are required to be answered by all affected agencies in the time specified by the Penal Code. While the Penal Code does not require any follow-up by subsequent Grand Juries, it is implied.

Interested parties are encouraged to read the full responses from affected agencies on file with the Superior Court. Citizens are encouraged to respond to any part of the Final Report.

### ***Civil Responsibilities:***

The Grand Jury may examine all aspects of county and city government, and special districts, to ensure that the best interests of the citizens are being served. The Grand Jury reviews and evaluates procedures, methods, and systems used by the county government for efficiency and economy.

### ***The Grand Jury is authorized to:***

- Inspect and audit books and records to ensure legal expenditures and accounting of public funds
- Inquire into the conditions of prisons, jails, and detention centers in Inyo County.
- Inquire into charges of willful misconduct in office by public officials or employees.
- Subpoena witnesses and documents in the course of an investigation.

The Grand Jury reports on investigations in the annual Final Report. The Final Report contains all findings and recommendations made as a result of the investigations and is distributed to public officials, libraries, and to the general public and news media.

### ***Citizen Complaints:***

As part of its civil function, the Grand Jury receives written complaints from citizens alleging inefficiencies and misconduct in government, or mistreatment by public officials. Complaints received from citizens are investigated for their validity. Such complaints are kept confidential, and members of the Grand Jury frequently rely on information from concerned citizens who are aware of problems, and who are willing to pursue corrective action. If the situation warrants, and the matter is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Jury, appropriate action is taken. That action

may be a report, a recommendation for civil action, or a formal indictment or accusation if criminal matters are involved.

## **INYO COUNTY RESPONSES TO THE 2000-2001 GRAND JURY REPORT**

*COUNTY RESPONSE*  
*To the*  
*GRAND JURY 2000-2001 FINAL REPORT*  
*"INYO COUNTY JUVENILE- DETENTION CENTER"*

Finding 1. "The facility was well maintained and very clean."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 2. "Facility staff members were extremely cooperative at all levels."

**County Response: Agree**

Finding 3. "Day room acoustics are very poor and have been since the facility opened. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to rectify the problem. Poor acoustics lead to communication and supervision problems."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 4. "There is still a very foul unidentified odor in the building, which becomes extreme in February, March and April."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 5. "Food for inmates is not particularly appetizing and does not appear to be sufficient for growing teenagers. The lack of a cook does not help the problem [Note: since *the Grand Jury's* visit, a part-time cook has been hired.]

**County Response: Disagree.** *While the County recognizes that institutional food may lack appeal to some, the food served to the juveniles detained at the Inyo County Juvenile Detention Facility is prepared, monitored and served within the nutritional guidelines set by the State of California Department of Corrections. It is incumbent upon the Staff at the facility to ensure the safety and welfare of the juveniles in their care and the Board of Supervisors is proud of Staff's commitment to meet the nutritional guidelines established by the State. At the present time the Board has approved and funded a full-time cook for the facility.*

Finding 6. "There is a lack of adequate outside lighting, especially in the intake area (west entrance)."

**County Response: Agree**

Finding 7. "The exterior fence provides no privacy in the exercise yard."



**County Response: Agree**

Finding 8. "There is no drinking fountain in the exercise yard."

**County Response: Disagree.** *Since the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the Inyo County Juvenile Detention Facility a drinking fountain has been installed in the exercise yard.*

Finding 9. "Landscaping is poor or non-existent."

**County Response: Disagree partially.** *The front and sides of the facility have been landscaped. The back portion of the facility, around the exercise yard is not landscaped.*

Finding 10. "Facility staff is below authorized strength, and recruiting is very difficult due to low pay. The pay scale is such that a certain Supervising Counselor is currently making less than some Juvenile Counselors."

**County Response:** *Disagree partially. The staffing levels may dip below the authorized strength for a variety of reasons. At the present time there are several positions being recruited. While pay is one of many factors in why it is difficult to fill positions at the Juvenile Facility, it should not be characterized as the only or primary factor. The Facility is a 24-hour a day locked facility. This means that Staff is required to work shift and weekend work as well as on-call. These types of limitations, along with the fact that many qualified people are choosing to remain in the urban areas as opposed to moving to the smaller, rural and more remote areas where services and amenities are limited, coupled with the lack of people choosing to enter this sector of the "human services" field, are the reasons why recruitment for detention facilities is a state-wide issue.*

Finding 11. "Mental Health counselor response is inadequate because of low staffing. Recruiting is very difficult, due in part to low pay."

**County .response:** *Unable to agree or disagree. The County is unsure as to what the Grand Jury's finding pertains to.*

Finding 12. "Facility staff members are to be commended for their efforts, even though they are under authorized strength."

**County Response: Agree.** *The County is proud of all of their employees. They do an excellent job for the citizens of Inyo County, and they are to be commended.*

Recommendation 1. "Correct acoustics in the day room."

**County Response:** *The recommendation has been implemented. This past year the Public Works Department has hung ceiling flags and installed acoustic carpet on the walls. It has made some impact but additional work needs to be done. Public Works*

*will continue to evaluate and find solutions for the problem.*

Recommendation 2. "Find the source of the foul odor that impacts the facility and correct the problem."

**County Response:** *The recommendation will be implemented within reason. This matter has been referred to the Public Works Department. They have brought in outside consultants as well as State Environmentalists with mechanical sniffers. No source for the odor can be found. They will continue to evaluate and look for the source so the problem can be eliminated.*

Recommendation 3. "The Juvenile Center should have a full-time cook on staff."

**County Response:** *The recommendation has been implemented. The request to make the part-time cook position a full-time position was presented to the Board of Supervisors, who took the recommendation under advisement during the "final budget adoption " process. At that time the Board prioritized this request in context with other requests for "General Fund" dollars and authorized a full time cook position for the Juvenile Center.*

Recommendation 4. "The outside fencing should be improved to provide privacy in the exercise yard."

**County Response:** *The recommendation will be considered. The recommendation for privacy fencing for the exercise yard is currently being analyzed by the County Administrator. Should the need for this fencing be recognized by the State Board of Corrections as a requirement, the County will take the appropriate steps to comply with this obligation.*

Recommendation 5. "Inyo County needs to solve the problem of recruitment and retention of Staff."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. The County continually evaluates personnel policies and procedures, including pay scales, recruitment methodologies, labor pool inadequacies, and negotiation strategies. Personnel is an evolving process and the County will continue to find new and innovative ways to meet the Staffing needs of its programs, in order to ensure that service is performed at the highest level.*

Recommendation 6. "Landscaping, drinking fountain in the exercise yard and exterior lighting at the west entrance of the Juvenile Center is strongly urged."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented. The drinking*

*fountain has been installed. Front and side yard landscaping was installed last fall, and Healthy Start Grant funds have been dedicated to landscape the exercise yard.*

Recommendation 7. "Juvenile Facility staff needs to be provided with adequate access to Mental Health Counselors."

**County Response: This recommendation will be implemented.** *The successful recruitment of a Behavioral Health Program Coordinator is expected in the very near future, at which time the minors, in custody, will receive direct mental health treatment and assessment and staff will receive mental health treatment training.*

**COUNTY RESPONSE**  
**GRAND JURY 2000-2001 FINAL REPORT**

**"INYO COUNTY DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS"**

Finding 1. "There has been substantial improvement over what existed four or five years ago, and considerable progress has been made in just this last year."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 2. "The formation of a Disaster Council involving all government agencies (county, state, LADWP, City of Bishop, federal, public schools) is largely beneficial. It is the steering committee for the other groups."

**County Response: Agree**

Finding 3. "The formation of the Communication Coordinator's Group, which meets monthly with representatives from every essential agency, and is particularly designed to coordinate communications between agencies, is a positive step."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 4. "The Southeastern part of the county is in inadequate shape, lacking most of the critical services needed."

**County Response: Unable to agree or disagree. Without more specific information the County is unable to respond.**

Finding 5. "The county's 911 communication system is outdated and in urgent need of upgrading."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 6. "There are four small trailers in the county containing medical supplies. These could handle relatively small incidents, but are not sufficient for a major incident or disaster."

**County Response: Disagree partially. Depending upon what type of major disaster and the extent of the area involved, these trailers would have the capability of handling more than just small emergencies.**

Finding 7 "There Is a need for bioterrorism and HazMat training in the appropriate agencies."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 9. "There are still no visible identification vests or other identification for the key personnel."

**County Response: Agree.**

Recommendation 1. "That the county devote more resources to this critical program."

**County Response:** *The recommendation has been implemented. Adequate resources continue to be provided by the County through its Disaster Services Budget, separate grants, and from the collaborative group of agencies involved in this critical Countywide program.*

Recommendation 2. "That the county build up emergency medical supplies of the basic non-dated items."

**County Response:** *The recommendation will be implemented when reasonable. Presently the County is in communication with the local emergency medical providers to address these resources and determine a plan to upgrade them and possibly expand the resources.*

Recommendation 3. "Seek all grants possible for HazMat and bioterrorism training and equipment."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented when reasonable. The County is presently receiving/pursuing grants in bioterrorism for equipment and training. One of the grants will allow the County to hire a consultant to update the County's HazMat Area Plan, including establishing mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties. Another grant will provide funding for equipment and training for the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District.*

Recommendation 4. "That the county help the southeastern part of the county to have adequate training and equipment necessary for public safety."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented to the extent possible. As stated in the County's response to Recommendation No.3, a grant is being processed to obtain equipment and training for the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District. Additionally the County and the District are pursuing many other funding mechanisms to help the district upgrade their equipment and services. Training for response to HazMat and low-level radioactive waste shipments is scheduled for August and September and County Staff along with the District, continue to pursue cooperative mutual aid agreements with Inyo County, Nevada and San Bernardino County.*

Recommendation 5. "That the county take all necessary steps to upgrade the countywide communication system as soon as possible."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented to the extent possible.*

*The County is proceeding with the recommendations of the Consultant to upgrade the 911 Emergency Communication System. Funding recommendations are being prepared to be presented to the County's Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) for review and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. An upgrade to the system will proceed at the level the County is able to fund.*

Recommendation 6. "That key personnel have visible and recognizable identification so the public can see instantly the authority of the personnel involved."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented. The County will process the purchase of colored vests to provide clear designation of authority and assignments for the Emergency Operation Center this year. Additionally, those agencies/organizations and County personnel involved in emergency response can obtain a picture ID badge from the County Personnel Department.*

Recommendation 7. "That the county recognize that ongoing training, upgrading of equipment and knowledge is critical in this fast-changing world and plan accordingly."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. The County Office of Emergency Services routinely addresses the knowledge, coordination, training and equipment that is necessary for continual and effective emergency preparedness, as is evidenced by the Agendas for the Unified Command Meetings. The Unified Command committees address the requirements and develop recommendations and plans for improvement. The Federal Emergency Management Assistance Grant requires the County to outline their goals yearly and report semiannually and at the end of the fiscal year the accomplishments of the program.*

Recommendation 8. "The county and all other agencies are urged to do those things necessary to protect life and property, knowing full well that it is not a question of 'if,' but 'when' a major emergency or disaster will occur in this area."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. The County will continue to take the appropriate actions necessary to protect life and property during emergencies and/or disasters. The dedication and commitment of those organizations and agencies who are a part of the Unified Command is a testament to this goal.*

Recommendation 9. "The Sheriff is to be congratulated for instituting special training of officers to handle school emergencies."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will be implemented. The Board of Supervisors would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Sheriff and the men and women of the Inyo County Sheriff's Department for their commitment to the safety of our children. Thank you!*

**COUNTY RESPONSE**  
**GRAND JURY 2000-2001 FINAL REPORT**

**"LONG TERM CARE"**

Finding 1 "The Inyo and Mono County Supervisors have created IMAAA as a joint powers agency concerned with all matters that relate to the needs of older persons."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 2. "IMAAA is funded by the State (California Department of Aging), the Federal government (Older Americans Act), the aforementioned counties with matching funds, and by additional resources from participant and community donations."

**County Response: Agree**

Finding 3. "IMAAA has been designated by the State of California to plan and administer these services. IMAAA, in turn, operates the Linkages Program which links elderly and dependent adults to services which help them maintain independent living in the community by providing comprehensive assessment, care planning, and direct services. Presently it is providing these home care and personal services for about 110 clients who do not otherwise qualify for in-home supportive services."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 4. "IMAAA also operates the Inyo-Mono Seniors Program (IMSP), which is responsible for providing many of the least restrictive long-term care services. Home delivered meals, for instance, are provided by this program to homebound individuals. IMSP averages 250 clients per day."

**County Response: Agree**

Finding 5. "Under contract with IMAAA, the First United Methodist Church of Bishop operates an Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, which also offers respite for caregivers."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 6. "For those who qualify financially, the Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services operates the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program. A homemaker will be provided at no cost or for a share of cost for a specified number of hours per month."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 7. 'Home health services are also available through Pioneer Home Health Care, a private provider, which provides intermittent medical care to the homebound at a cost.'

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 8. "The Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services also provides adult Protective Services which can deal with the problems of elder and dependent adult abuse. A related program is the Ombudsman/Advocacy Services of Inyo County, which can investigate and resolve complaints of residents in long-term care facilities."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 9. "It is the stated aim of IMAAA and the Mission Statement of the Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services to provide the services available to assist and improve their clients' ability to live independently and productively in the community setting as long as possible."

**County Response: Agree.**

Finding 10. "Notwithstanding the two classes mentioned above, training and retaining health care personnel for both the institutional and home situation remains a problem due to relatively low pay and lack of promotional opportunity."

**County Response: Disagree partially.** *As mentioned in previous responses to the Grand Jury's findings in other areas, while pay scales may be a contributing factor to the recruitment dilemma, there are many other factors which affect the hiring and retaining of Staff, among those are the lack of qualified candidates who meet minimum requirements of the jobs, the necessity for these people to work shifts and be on-call, the nationwide trend of our young people to seek more exciting and more lucrative professions.*

Finding 11. "Inyo County is one of the leading counties in California regarding the proportion of senior citizens in its population."

**County Response: Agree.**

Recommendation 1. "That the Inyo-Mono Area Agency on Aging (IMAAA) and the Inyo County Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) be commended for the services that they provide for our citizens who are in need of long-term care."

**County Response: The recommendation will be implemented.** *Once again, it is with great pleasure that the Board of Supervisors takes this opportunity to publicly commend and thank their employees on a whole and in particular the employees of IMAAA and HHS for their dedication and commitment to our citizens and most importantly to our seniors. Thank you!*

Recommendation 2. "That IMAAA and the Inyo County Department of HHS continue to explore all sources of funding for the programs that they offer."



**County Response:** *The recommendation has been implemented. The County, through the Health and Human Services Department and the IMAAA Program, will continue to be proactive in locating funding sources which will provide the means through which the many worthwhile programs, offered by the County for seniors, are maintained and hopefully enhanced.*

Recommendation 3. "That IMAAA and the Inyo County Department of HHS continue, and wherever possible, expand their efforts to publicize the services available to those who require long-term care."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. IMAAA and HHS, as part of the programs they offer, seek out, from every corner of the County, eligible recipients. Just recent/y during the Budget Hearings, the IMAAA Program reported that there are approximately 6,000 people over the age of 60 in Inyo and Mono Counties and 16% of those are under the poverty level. The Program has provided unduplicated services to 3, 500 people. They serve 145 hot meals a day at facilities and over 250 meals are delivered to homebound clients each day With these types of statistics, it easy to see that the efforts of IMAAA and HHS, to reach our senior citizens, are successful.*

Recommendation 4. "That where appropriate, these agencies also bring to the attention of the public the services that are available through other non-public agencies."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. It is an on-going goal and mission, as noted earlier, of the IMAAA and HHS Programs to coordinate the services available to our seniors in order to help them maintain an independent lifestyle for as long as possible. IMAAA has just recently adopted a plan for Aging Services which includes the objective to develop, publish and distribute an informational newsletter for the general public which gives an overview of services available in Inyo and Mono Counties provided by the County and other agencies. IMAAA is also preparing access information to be available through the County of Inyo web-site.*

Recommendation 5. "That IMAAA, the Inyo County Department of HHS, and the Inyo County Office of Education explore cooperative efforts with other public agencies to expand training programs for caregivers in the field of long-term care."

**County Response:** *This recommendation has been implemented. HHS, through its Workforce Investment Act Program is currently offering Care giver training which can lead to certification as a Certified Nurses Aid (CNA); Home Health Aid and potentially an Licensed Vocational Nurse's (LVN) license. Additionally it is anticipated that as the Cerro Coso College campus is expanded additional educational programs in health and human services fields will be a part of the College's curriculum.*

Recommendation 6. "That the Inyo County Department of Health & Human Services compile a list of trained caregivers and make it available to the public."

**County Response:** *This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Other counties have attempted to compile such a list with varying degrees of success. The risk liability and the degree of staffing required to compile and maintain such a list outweighs the benefits. The time and money that would be required to success-*

*fully complete this undertaking would be better spent on program services.*

**COUNTY RESPONSE**  
**GRAND JURY 2000-2001 FINAL REPORT**

**"INYO COUNTY JAIL"**

Finding 3. "Recruiting of Correctional Officers and Deputies is very difficult, primarily because of the pay scales."

**County Response: Disagree partially.** While the County continues to experience recruiting shortages, we would have to disagree that the primary reason is the pay scales. The County's pay scale for Correctional Officers and Deputies is in line with like counties. Some of the other problems encountered during the recruitment process include the lack of qualified candidates, the type of work schedule required, and the remoteness of the County. With the ever increasing danger associated with the law enforcement field, many of our younger adults are choosing safer and more lucrative fields for their careers. This is a nation-wide problem that is being addressed by the law enforcement community.

Recommendation 1. "The County needs to solve the recruiting, training and retention of Correctional Officers and Sheriff's Deputies problem before it becomes acute."

**County Response: The recommendation will be implemented.** Just this year, the Board of Supervisors has approved funding for a new program which helps defray the cost of training new recruits. Also, there is new legislation which will provide the Sheriff's Department with additional funding which may be able to be used to improve the recruitment, training and retention issues associated with Correctional Officers and Sheriff's Deputies.

**Bishop Police Department  
Interoffice Memorandum**

Date: August 2, 2001

**PD1706**

**To:** Inyo County 2000-2001 Grand Jury

**From:** Chief Bruce Dishion

**Subject:** Response to 2000-2001 Inyo County Grand Jury Report

**Findings**

1. Agree - our facility is clean and well maintained.
2. Agree - our staff always attempts to be cordial and cooperative.
3. Agree - we have remodeled our evidence storage area and revised our department evidence manual.
4. Agree - our holding cells are free of obnoxious types of odors.
5. Agree - the department can always use more facility space.
6. Agree - updated manuals and procedures remain a priority by this administration.

**Recommendations**

1. This recommendation has already been partially implemented. Approximately Two hundred forty (240) square feet of storage have already been built to the rear of the police station. This project was completed after the 2000-2001 Grand Jury visit. This administration will always be working with City Council to provide a quality police station, as needed. I believe the Grand Jury, as well as the City Council, are very aware of City Budget restraints.
-

No response received from Bishop City Council

**INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2001-2002  
CONTINUITY REPORT**

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury recommended that the 2001-2002 Grand Jury follow up on a few issues that they held over. This report does just that. The 2001-2002 Grand Jury would also recommend that the 2002-2003 Grand Jury look into a few issues from the county's responses to the 2000-2001 final Grand Jury Report.

1. The recommendation for more security lighting around the perimeter of the juvenile facility and the parking areas has been completed. The 2001-2002 Grand Jury visited the juvenile facility and noted that it had sufficient lighting in the parking area and around the perimeter.
2. The recommendation that safety stops be placed on all hoists was partially implemented. At the time of this report Mr. Jeff Jewitt reported to the 2001-2002 Grand Jury that after evaluation only one hoist did not have a safety stop. This hoist is located at the Main Street Shop and a safety stop was installed.
3. The recommendation that all tools belonging to Inyo County be clearly marked. This has been implemented. However, mechanics are required to have their own tools so these tools would not be marked as Inyo County tools.
4. The recommendation to install a rolling door to replace the plastic cover where the chains are installed at the Lone Pine Yard is underway. The walls and walkway have been installed. At the time of this report the installation of the rolling doors was near completion.
5. The status of the 2000-2001 Grand Jury's recommendation concerning installation of additional lighting in the metal building in the Lone Pine Yard is unknown. At the time of this report a lighting conversion is being considered. The 2001-2002 Grand Jury recommends that the 2002-2003 Grand Jury follow up on this issue.
6. The recommendation that the County provide welding screens to all yards utilizing arc welders has been implemented.
7. The recommendation that attendance at safety meetings be filed by division and not date and that a copy be kept at each division has been implemented. Each division keeps a record of attendance to safety meetings. The filing system is left up to the individual doing the filing. Papers should be filed according to the system that works best for each individual.
8. In its response to the 2000-2001 Grand Jury Final Report, the County states that the acoustical problem in the day room at the juvenile facility has been implemented. But much more needs to be done. The 2001-2002 Grand Jury recommends that the 2002-2003 Grand Jury follow up on this issue.

9. California Open Meeting Law (Brown Act): This is a continuing concern of Grand Juries past and present. The 2001-2002 Grand Jury recommends that subsequent grand juries correspond with all school and special districts regarding the Brown Act. A yearly letter to all such governing bodies could include where to get information concerning the key provisions that such districts need to be aware of. Also, requesting a letter of response from each district would be beneficial to future grand juries.

5. Final reports by future grand juries should include a segment on the Brown Act, alerting the school and special districts that the Grand Jury may be the appointed body to conduct oversight concerning their compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

**INVESTIGATIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE 2001-2002 GRAND JURY**

## **2001/2002 INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT ON JAILS AND PRISONS WITHIN INYO COUNTY**

Each County Grand Jury is required by California Penal Code Section 919b to inquire into the conditions and management of the public jails and prisons within their county during their term of service and to report on what they find. In accordance with this mandate the 2001/2002 Inyo County Grand Jury inspected the Inyo County Jail and the Inyo County Juvenile Detention Center on September 5, 2001, and the Bishop City Jail and the Owens Valley Conservation Camp #26 on November 14, 2001.



## **Inyo County Jail**

The Inyo County Sheriff's Department maintains the Inyo County Jail in Independence. The jail building also houses the Sheriff's Department main office. The Jail is staffed by Deputies, Correctional Officers, and support staff. The six year old five million dollar facility appeared to be well run and maintained.

The Jail was originally designed to accommodate 99 inmates, male and female, over the age of seventeen. The original design also allowed for easy expansion to double the capacity, and projections based on the sharp increase in incarcerations occurring five to ten years ago were that expansion would be needed by now. However, those projections have proven to have been inaccurate. At the time of the Grand Jury's inspection, there were just 47 inmates, the lowest number in the Inyo County Jail in the past twenty years. The average stay is just 3 days, the maximum stay is one year.

The kitchen facility, which appeared to be clean and well equipped, serves inmates three meals a day. Inmates assist with kitchen duties. Sheriff Dan Lucus said the philosophy followed is "a well-fed inmate is a less troublesome inmate."

The medical clinic in the facility appeared to be well equipped and maintained, and adequately staffed. The clinic staff diagnose and treat minor ailments and dispense individual doses of prescribed medications at the prescribed times. Inmates are allowed no medications in their cells.

Psychiatric evaluations and mental health problems are handled by the Inyo County Department of Mental Health, from the Bishop office.

Although the jail staff is currently adequate, an additional correctional officer or two would be desirable to reduce overtime. The Sheriff's Department is engaged in active and on-going recruiting, as a number of the personnel in that department will be retiring within the next five years. There is a particular need for female correctional officers. Recruitment and hiring has proven to be difficult.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. During the Grand Jury's inspection, staff was informative, cooperative and courteous.
2. The Jail facility was clean and appeared to be well maintained and in good condition, with the exception noted in Finding 3.
3. Two cracks were noticed in the wall just outside the visiting room.

4. At the time of the Grand Jury's visit, the jail was five (5) officers short of a full staff.
5. The facility appears to be run in a competent and professional manner, in spite of correctional officer staffing problems.
6. The Sheriff's Department has requested funding for two transport officers, to transport inmates to court appearances, medical appointments and such. This function is currently performed by deputies and correctional officers.
7. Food and general medical care for inmates appears to be adequate. Mental health and substance abuse counseling programs are available to inmates. Providers include: Inyo County Department of Mental Health, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Toiyabe Indian Health Project.
8. As required by law, a law library is provided for use by inmates.
9. There is no general library, and there is no inmate access to the Inyo County Library system.
10. Most inmates appeared to be occupied watching television.
11. Educational programs that might guide inmates toward learning how to be successful members of society upon release do not appear to be available.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The cracks in the wall should be repaired.
2. The need for recruiting, training and retention of Correctional Officers and Sheriff's Deputies should continue to be addressed before retirement of present staff creates acute problems.
3. Inmate library access should be established by a cooperative effort with the Inyo County Library and by increasing public awareness of the need for donations.
4. The educational potential of television should be explored and exploited to the extent that safety and security concerns permit.

RESPONSE REQUIRED BY: Inyo County Sheriff – Recommendations 1-4  
Inyo County Library – Recommendation 3



## **Juvenile Detention Center**

The Inyo County Juvenile Detention Center in Independence was built in 1995. In the Center, the County confines and cares for minors who have been judged to pose a danger to themselves or to their community.

The Inyo County Juvenile Detention Center is under the direction of Chief Probation Officer Toby Dickenson. Chief Deputy Probation Officer George Johnston is in charge of day to day operations. The facility, along with the Inyo County Jail across the street, are the newest and the most modern government buildings Inyo County has.

The facility appeared to be well run and maintained by a capable professional staff that were openly enthusiastic about the job they are doing. The staff all projected genuine interest in the individuals in their custody.

On the day of the Grand Jury's visit, the facility was almost at capacity, with fourteen detainees. Many had gotten into trouble at the County Fair the previous weekend.

Juveniles in the facility usually range in age from 12 through 17, although some 18 year-olds are kept there under special circumstances. The average time spent in this facility is 17 to 20 days, and one year is the maximum stay.

Several problems found by previous Grand Juries have been addressed:

- A water fountain has been installed in the exercise yard.
- Bids to install privacy striping in the chain-link fence around the privacy yard will be solicited either in this fiscal year, if funding is available in the present facility budget, or after July 1, 2002.
- A part-time cook has been hired and, at the time of the Grand Jury's visit, the County was taking applications to fill that position on a full-time basis.

Several problems with the facility have existed since it was opened, and remain unresolved:

- Noise in the dayroom.
- An unpleasant odor in parts of the building, particularly in the winter months
- A problem also exists with the kitchen, which the Grand Jury was advised does not currently meet County Health Department regulations. To bring it into compliance, all of the appliances and the counter need to be replaced. Also, there is an urgent need for additional food storage space. Fortunately, there is a room accessible

from the kitchen that was built as part of the original building and never completed. It would be relatively inexpensive to develop this room into the needed food storage space. The staff sees the possibility that, consistent with security considerations, an expanded kitchen could be an integral part of educational and vocational training, with therapeutic benefits.

#### FINDINGS:

1. The Juvenile Detention Center was clean appeared to be well maintained.
2. The staff was cooperative with the Grand Jury during the investigation. They appear to be dedicated to and concerned with the welfare and development of the juveniles detained in their custody, and maintain an emphasis on positive reinforcement and rehabilitation.
3. Poor acoustics in the day-room continue to be a problem, as it has been since the Juvenile Detention Center opened. The two attempts to rectify the problem, covering a remote section of the wall with carpet and hanging small state flags from the ceiling, have produced less than satisfactory results. Poor acoustics lead to communication and supervision problems, which can quickly lead to security concerns.
4. The Grand Jury was told that there is still a very foul unidentified odor in the building, usually during the wetter months of February, March and April.
5. Since last year's Grand Jury recommended that the Juvenile Detention Center should have a full-time cook on staff, a part-time cook has been hired, and steps are being taken to make that a full-time position.
6. The Grand Jury was advised that plans to renovate the kitchen to comply with County Health Department regulations are being developed in the Public Works Department.
7. The Juvenile Detention Center has no private and secure entrance for picking up and dropping off detainees.
8. A drinking fountain has been installed in the exercise yard, in accordance with last year's Grand Jury Recommendation.
9. Facility staff is below authorized strength. Recruiting faces the same obstacles as the county jail.
10. The Grand Jury was advised that Mental Health counselors for juveniles are not always available when needed.
11. The Juvenile Detention Center maintains an education program designed to meet the needs of the individual juveniles.

12. The Grand jury was advised that problems persist with the locks on the facility doors. In an emergency, this would be a serious safety concern.

13. The detainees' personal care items were observed in the same area as cleaning supplies.

14. Landscaping planned when the facility was built six years ago has never been completed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Other methods to correct the acoustics problem in the day room be explored until one is found to work.

2. Efforts should continue to find the source of the foul odor that impacts the facility and correct the problem.

3. The Juvenile Detention Center should have a full-time cook on staff, and renovation of the kitchen to comply with Health Department regulations should be undertaken promptly.

4. Learning opportunities for detainees in the kitchen, consistent with safety and security concerns, should be explored.

5. The problem of recruitment and retention of staff should be addressed.

6. Construction of a private and secure entrance at the west entrance should be considered.

7. The Juvenile Detention Center should be provided with adequate access to Mental Health Counselors when needed, particularly after regular business hours.

8. The problems with locks in the facility should be resolved immediately.

9. Personal care items should not be stored with cleaning supplies.

10. Library access should be established by a cooperative effort with the Inyo County Library and by increasing public awareness of the need for donations.

#### RESPONSE REQUIRED BY:

Inyo County Board of Supervisors- Recommendations 1-10

Inyo County Library- Recommendation 10

## **Bishop City Jail**

The City of Bishop maintains a small jail with two holding cells for the short term confinement of persons detained at the Bishop Police Department. Detentions there range from a few hours to overnight, until release or transport to the Inyo County Jail.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The facility was clean and appeared to be well maintained, especially considering its age.
2. During the Grand Jury's inspection, staff was informative, cooperative and courteous. The facility appears to be run in a competent and professional manner .
3. Although the crowded conditions noted by last year's Grand Jury have been somewhat relieved by a small storage unit which has been constructed in one corner of the parking area, the department is still cramped for space.
4. There is no off-site back-up for computerized information.
5. There is audio monitoring of the two holding cells, and audio and video monitoring of the booking cell. Audio recording of the holding cells is being considered.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The on-going efforts to acquire a larger facility for the department should continue to be pursued.
2. Development of an off-site back up system for computerized information should be considered.
3. Audio and video monitoring of the holding cells should be considered.

### **RESPONSE REQUIRED BY:**

Bishop Chief of Police- Recommendations 1-3  
Bishop City Council- Recommendations 1-3

## **Owens Valley Conservation Camp #26**

The State of California Department of Forestry maintains the Owens Valley Conservation Camp #26, commonly referred to as the Round Valley Conservation Camp, for the purpose of providing manpower to prevent and fight forest fires in Inyo and Mono Counties. The Camp also provides work crews for governmental and community service projects. The inmates at this camp have all earned the privilege of serving time at this camp by their good behavior at other facilities in the State prison system.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. Considering the age of the facility, it is clean and well maintained. New kitchen equipment and appliances were being installed on the day of Grand Jury's visit.
2. During the Grand Jury's inspection, staff was informative, cooperative and courteous. The facility appears to be run in a competent and professional manner.
3. The Camp is centrally located for the work the inmates perform: fire prevention, flood control and fighting fires, when they occur, in both Inyo and Mono Counties. The fire crews are also dispatched to fight fires at other locations in the State if necessary.
4. This Camp is currently on a list of six camps of its kind in California scheduled to be closed. Being the only camp of its kind in Inyo and Mono Counties, it is a valuable asset to the area. To reach the remote areas that teams from this camp have to cover, in a timely manner and in all kinds of weather, would be impractical from any other location.
5. The camp library consists of a small collection of donated, well worn, paperback books and magazines. Funding for magazine subscriptions has been cut off. There is a limited collection of craft tools available to the inmates.
6. The camp attempts to maintain a strong emphasis on prisoner rehabilitation. A GED program is held 2 nights a week. AA and NA groups meet regularly, and religious programs are available several times a week. A psychological counselor from the Department of Corrections visits the camp for 3 hours every 6 weeks; the counselor's time is used primarily to help inmates deal with institutional paperwork, rather than in therapeutic counseling.
7. There is no on-site medical care, other than first-aid. Inmates who report to sick-call are transported to Northern Inyo Hospital for treatment. Dental care is provided by contract with a dentist in Mammoth Lakes.
8. The Grand Jury was advised that exercise equipment was taken from the Camp last year because of a State law that prohibited such equipment in correctional facilities. The Grand Jury was also advised that another law requires that exercise equipment be available to fire fighters, such as the Camp inmates.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors should take whatever steps are available to have this Camp remain open, and should invite the Board of Supervisors of Mono County to join them in this endeavor.
2. The availability of reading materials at the camp should be increased by a cooperative effort with the Inyo County Library and by increasing public awareness of the need for donations.
3. Clarification of the State policy concerning camp inmate/fire fighters' access to the training equipment they need to stay in shape to perform this job should be obtained.

## RESPONSE REQUIRED BY:

Inyo County Board of Supervisors- Recommendation 1

Inyo County Library- Recommendation 2

Camp Commander-Owens Valley Conservation Camp #26- Recommendation 3

**2001-2002 INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
**SOUTHEAST REPORT ON COUNTY ISSUES**

# **2001-2002 INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY**

## **SOUTHEAST REPORT ON COUNTY ISSUES**

### **Reason for Review**

Early in the term of this year's Grand Jury, a complaint was presented by residents of the Tecopa/Shoshone area, which included several matters of concern. Those matters generally involved the Death Valley Unified School District, County Park facilities, County roads, and County representation. This report summarizes the findings of the Grand Jury regarding many of these matters.

### **Method of Investigation**

The complainants appeared before the full Grand Jury and they provided subsequent written information. The full Jury heard from the Superior Court Judge, the District Attorney, the Fifth District Supervisor, the County School Superintendent, the County Administrator, the Assistant County Administrator, and the Public Works Director. A Committee was formed to pursue investigation. Those Committee members visited the Shoshone, Tecopa and Tecopa Hot Springs areas, witnessed several of the locations of concern, and met with other officials while there.

### **SCHOOLS**

#### **FINDINGS:**

1. The Jury finds that the Death Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees may not have always been in full compliance with the provisions of the Brown Act, with respect to meeting notifications or locations. But any violations were not intentional or egregious but rather resulted from misunderstanding or lack of awareness. (The Jury has noted other findings concerning the Brown Act elsewhere in the end-of-year report.)
2. With respect to low student test scores, the District School Superintendent, in correspondence to the Jury, has stated that DVUSD "...has a significantly high percentage of special education students (20%) as compared to the statewide average of 10%." ,but are comparable to the special education student percentages of nearby Pahrump and Amargosa Valley. The Jury was also informed that under current funding formulas, additional resources to provide DVUSD with a Special Day Class Program are not available.
3. Given the remoteness of the Tecopa/Shoshone area and the vastness of the School District transportation demands, maintenance expenses are often higher than might be expected elsewhere. Efforts are made to seek maintenance at the most convenient locations when needed, even in nearby Nevada. Deferred maintenance on some older buses was performed after new units were placed into service.
4. Committee members observed the appearance of the school buildings in Shoshone. In his correspondence to the Jury, the Superintendent stated that with the help of "Deferred

Maintenance Fund monies” the main building will be plastered thereby partially correcting observed damage due to sprinkler overspray except on very windy days.

5. Regarding apparent mathematical discrepancies in the terms of the Superintendent’s contract, the Jury was informed that when such discrepancies were observed the Board of Trustees took corrective action. The Jury has also been informed of the contractual powers of a school district. Namely, a school district can contract for and amend as they see fit within the resources available to them and consistent with broad guidelines for the maintenance of levels of financial reserves required by the State – the County School Superintendent has little, if any, oversight in such matters.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Board of Trustees of the Death Valley Unified School District, individually and collectively, should review the specific requirements of the Brown Act pertaining to the conduct of their meetings, seek assistance from County Counsel or another informed source, and make every effort to insure that compliance is met. (The Jury has noted other findings concerning the Brown Act elsewhere in the end-of-year report)
2. The Board of Trustees of the Death Valley Unified School District and the District Superintendent should seek the cooperation of the County Superintendent and other County District Superintendents in reviewing funding formulas aimed at seeking parity for special education student needs within DVUSD, compared to their peers in the rest of the County; a Special Day Class Program for DVUSD should be established.
3. Transportation maintenance expenses should be reviewed often to insure that the most cost-effective means available are being used to meet the needs.
4. The Jury finds the proposal described by the Superintendent in his correspondence concerning the use of “Deferred Maintenance Fund Monies” for repairs to school buildings, in a timely manner, to be satisfactory; we have no further recommendation.
5. The Jury finds the actions explained by the Board of Trustees President regarding correction of contract discrepancies to be satisfactory; we have no further recommendation.

#### RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Death Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees: Recommendations 1, 2 & 3.

Death Valley Unified School District Superintendent: Recommendations 2 & 3.

Inyo County School Superintendent: Recommendation 2.

All Inyo County School District Superintendents: Recommendation 2

## **COUNTY PARKS**

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The Jury was informed of the operations of County Parks, including those facilities at Tecopa Hot Springs, by the Assistant County Administrator who also supervises the Parks and Recreation Department through a subordinate supervisor. During their visit, the Committee also met with one of the two County Park Rangers assigned to the Tecopa Hot Springs area.
2. During their visit to Tecopa Hot Springs, the Committee was shown the bathhouses, the social services center, and was given a walking tour of the RV Campground. The Jury learned that while most of the facilities at Tecopa Hot Springs are old, many corrections to access and/or signs have been made. Additional improvements to campground and bathhouse facilities are contemplated within the Master Plan for the area which is under review by County administration and the Board of Supervisors.
3. At the beginning of the current fiscal year, the County instituted an increase in campground fees at the Tecopa Hot Springs Campground. The Committee observed occupancy at the County RV Park of approximately fifty percent, or less, during a time when normal usage there, or in Death Valley, usually is at its peak. The County Park Ranger stated to the Committee that he did not believe the decrease was due to higher fees, but rather the state of our economy and national security concerns.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The Jury commends County Recreation and Parks staff for their knowledgeable and friendly manner and facilities and programs being offered.
2. The Jury believes that issues concerning the future of County operations at Tecopa Hot Springs appropriately rests with the Board of Supervisors.

## **ROADS**

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The Jury was advised by the Public Works Director that prioritization of County road maintenance in a County as geographically vast as Inyo is difficult, but is being examined through the use of a relatively new computerized data base. Previous resurfacing work on a County road in the Tecopa/Shoshone area was performed by shutting down the entire roadway for a time, an action which the Public Works Director stated should not be repeated. The condition of County roads leading into Tecopa Hot Springs, though rough, does not seem to discourage visitation by large RVs, and may be of some benefit in reducing speed through this congested and pedestrian area.

2. By comparison to County roads, State routes 127 and 178 in the area are heavily used, present substandard sight distances, and 127 may be used for the transport of hazardous waste to the Yucca Mountain site.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Jury finds the explanations provided by the Public Works Director regarding prioritization and field resurfacing practices to be satisfactory; we have no further recommendation.
2. Given the high level of tourist use of all roads in the area, the Jury recommends that County officials work closely with all appropriate governmental and state agency personnel to provide for increased safety of state routes in the area with special emphasis on State Route 127 as it may become more important in the proposed use of Yucca Mountain for the storage of hazardous nuclear waste.

#### RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Board of Supervisors: Recommendation 2

**2001-2002 INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
**INYO COUNTY LIBRARY REPORT**

## **2001/2002 Inyo County Grand Jury Report on the Inyo County Library System**

There are six library facilities in Inyo county. The central library is located in Independence with five branch libraries in Bishop, Big Pine, Lone Pine, Death Valley, and Tecopa Hot Springs. The Bishop Library has a daily volume of approximately three hundred patrons. The other branches have lesser amounts. There are approximately 40,000 books in the library system.

### **Reason for Review**

Complaints were received by the Grand Jury regarding the Inyo County Library System. One of the complaints concerned the failure to automate the libraries for computer access. A second complaint concerned the combining into one full-time position the Library Director and the County Museum Director. These complaints were initially filed with the 2000/2001 Grand Jury which, due to a conflict of interest by one member, was unable to proceed with an investigation. A committee of the 2001/2002 Grand Jury was formed to respond to the complaints and met with members of the library staff. The jury also met with Mr. Bill Michael concerning his appointment as Director of the Library/Museum.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The library's card catalog has not been fully automated for computer access.
2. Because of the lack of automation, intensive labor is required to organize and to track books and materials.
3. By combining the positions of Library Director and Museum Director into one full-time position, a cost savings was realized.
4. The library has also lost a half-time secretary position.
5. The County of Inyo has advertised three times for a qualified library director. The position requires a Masters Degree in Library Science. While some of the responding candidates did possess the requisite graduate degree, they were not hired. Instead, Mr. Michael, who holds a Masters Degree in another academic field, was given the position.
6. Complaints dealing with the day-to-day library issues are addressed in the Library Policies and Procedures Manual.
7. There are numerous financial grants available from the State of California to improve and upgrade public libraries. With the implementation of certain programs, such as homework clubs and reading groups, the county's eligibility to receive such grants would improve.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The county should place a higher priority on funding the automation of the county libraries' card catalogue for computer access.
2. Internet access to the card catalogue system should be made available.
3. The savings realized from the combining of the two directors positions should remain in the library system.
4. The Library Director, or someone within the library system, should aggressively seek state grants and implement programs to improve the county's eligibility to receive such funds.

#### RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Inyo County Board of Supervisors: Recommendations 1-4  
Director of Library/Museum: Recommendations 1-4

**2001/2002 INYO COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
**REPORT ON THE BISHOP AIRPORT**

## **REPORT ON THE BISHOP AIRPORT**

The Bishop airport is approximately one mile east of the Bishop and north of East Line Street. The facility comprises 800 acres of land leased from the Los Angeles City Department of Water and Power. The airport has three runways: 7498, 5600, and 5566 feet in length respectively. Inyo County has recently constructed a new airport terminal building that will house the Airport Operations, Inyo-Mono Transit and a restaurant when completed. At the time of this report, the terminal building was not yet occupied.

### **Reason For Review**

A written complaint was received by the Grand Jury concerning the location and construction of the new terminal building. The Grand Jury met with the Director of Public Works, Mr. Jeff Jewett, to discuss these issues. The jury also visited the airport and was given a tour by airport manager, Barnes. A committee was formed within the jury to further investigate issues raised in the complaint. The findings of the committee are set forth below.

### **FINDINGS**

1. The location of the terminal building was determined by Mr. Jeff Jewett, Director of Public Works, along with Mr. Barnes, airport manager.
2. The terminal is roofed with high dimensional asphalt shingles that carry a twenty-five year guarantee. The shingles specified in the original plans were not available, and the type that was ultimately selected constitute an upgrade.
2. The original building plans provided for optional layout features. From these options, the county elected to have a patio and cover and an all-weather entrance constructed. In order to comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) additional concrete walkways were also constructed.
3. The nozzles for the fire suppression system that are exposed to the elements are nitrogen-filled to prevent freezing. The fire suppression system does not have an adequate water supply, since it was installed in anticipation of a new well being drilled. However, the jury was informed that the terminal may be occupied in the interim.
5. Mr. Michener was the project engineer and Ken Bonnefin was the building inspector for the construction.
6. The terminal building is equipped with a Sears non-residential heating and air-conditioning system that exceeds the specifications for the building size. The building code does not allow for commercial buildings to have windows that open.

7. The restaurant kitchen was planned to allow for the flexibility of the operators who will eventually occupy the facility. Two different types of electrical outlets were installed, 110/120 and 230/240. There are also two pass-through windows from the kitchen to the restaurant area to use as the new occupants see fit.

7. There are two septic lines servicing the new building: one from the restroom/shower area and a line running from the restaurant. A grease interceptor was installed in the line from the restaurant.

9. There are seventeen years remaining on Inyo County's airport property lease. There is a full twenty-year lease requirement in order for the county to receive grant money for construction of the needed well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends that the county execute a new twenty-year lease with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to secure grant monies for completion of the well.

Response required by: Inyo County Board of Supervisors

**2001-2002 GRAND JURY**

**REPORT ON THE CALIFORNIA OPEN MEETING LAW  
(Brown Act)**

## **REPORT ON THE CALIFORNIA OPEN MEETING LAW (Brown Act)**

### **Background**

In conjunction with its investigation of citizen complaints, the Grand Jury has questioned general compliance with the Brown Act. The Jury solicited information from school and special districts regarding their awareness of necessary regulations applicable to independent governmental bodies, specifically concerning the conducting of business meetings which, by law, must be open to the public. On March 27, 2002, a letter was sent to all school and special districts seeking information concerning compliance with the Brown Act. As of the date of this report, twelve responses have been received.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The California Open Meetings Law (Brown Act) requires local governmental bodies to: post all meeting agendas in a public place 72 hours prior to a regular meeting (24 hours prior to a special meeting); (2) items for discussion and/or vote must be conducted in open session, unless specifically authorized for closed session; (3) items not listed on the agenda are not to be discussed or voted upon; (4) a public comment period must be scheduled either before or after discussion of agenda items; and (5) meetings are to be held within district boundaries.
2. From the twelve responses to the Grand Jury's letter, there appears to be an awareness of requirements of the Brown Act, although three of the special districts requested more information and indicated that they would be in contact with the County Counsel, Mr. Paul Bruce. The Grand Jury members would like to have attended public meetings of school and special districts, but time did not permit them to do so.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. All school and special districts should follow all reporting requirements of the county. As public information, the districts should correspond with the County Clerk on a yearly basis to help keep public records, such as membership and contact sources, up to date.
2. All school and special districts should make certain that agendas are posted 72 hours prior to regular meetings. Although it is not a requirement, the Grand Jury recommends that special districts should also give notice to the press of all public meetings.
3. All school and special districts need to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the requirements of the Brown Act. When new members are elected or appointed to a district governing body, Brown Act training should be mandatory. A publication concerning the Brown Act may be obtained from the State Attorney General's office. Local training is also available by contacting the Inyo County Counsel, Mr. Paul Bruce. Special effort should be made to train all special district board members, as well as newly elected/appointed members, in the provisions and requirements of the Brown Act.

4. As stated in our Continuity Report, the 2001-2002 Grand Jury recommends that subsequent grand juries correspond with all school and special districts regarding the Brown Act. A yearly letter to all such governing bodies could include where to get information concerning the key provisions that such districts need to be aware of. Also, requesting a letter of response from each district would be beneficial to future grand juries.
5. Also as stated in our Continuity Report Final reports by future grand juries should include a segment on the Brown Act, alerting the school and special districts that the Grand Jury may be the appointed body to conduct oversight concerning their compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

RESPONSE SUGGESTED BY: Inyo County Board of Supervisors